

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 03726

DEPT PASS USDA ELECTRONICALLY FOR FAS/ESCS/SCHOONOVER

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, EPAP, UR
SUBJECT: VIKTOR LOUIS ARTICLE

REF: LONDON 02697

1. VIKTOR LOUIS, WITH HIS INTERESTING CONNECTIONS, OFTEN HAS ACCESS TO INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE TO FOREIGN EMBASSIES, AND HE MAY VERY WELL BE CORRECT ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF A CENTRAL COMMITTEE RESOLUTION THAT DEALS, IN PART AT LEAST, WITH THE SUBJECT OF MORE FAVORABLE TREATMENT FOR PRIVATE PLOTS. WHEN HE MENTIONED DECISION NO. 843 TO A VISTING JOURNLIASST EARLIER THIS YEAR HE PUT THE DATE OF SEPTEMBER 16, 1977 ON IT. A QUICK CHECK OF THE SOBRANIE POSTANOVLENIY INDICATES THAT IT HAS NOT BEEN PUBLISHED BUT THE NUMBER AND DATE ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE REST OF THE SERIES, WHICH LENDS CIRCUMSTANTIAL SUPPORT TO ITS EXISTENCE.

2. WE CHECKED WITH MINAG SOURCE ON MATTER, AND HE INDICATED NO KNOWLEDGE OF SUCH A DECISION. HE WAS CLEARLY
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SKEPTICAL THAT ANY SUCH DECISION OR RESOLUTION ON INDIVIDUAL PRIVATE PLOTS HAD BEEN MADE BY CPSU CC, OR THAT MINAG WOULD HAVE ISSUED ANY DIRECTIVE ON THE SUBJECT. CONTACT INDICATED FULL KNOWLEDGE OF GENSEC BREZHNEV POLICY, ISSUANCES AND CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES ON MATTER, AND COMMENTED THAT USUAL NEXT STEP WOULD SIMPLY BE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO FOLLOW THROUGH AND PROVIDE MORE

SUPPORT TO SUBSIDIARY PLOTS.

3. UK ECONOFF, WHO HAD FIRST HEARD OF DECISION 843 FROM THE VISTING JOURNALIST MENTIONED ABOVE, CONSIDERS THAT ARTICLES ON AGRICULTURE IN TRUD OF JANUARY 8 AND 18 CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH CONTENT LOUIS ASCRIBES TO 843. HE ALSO CITES A KAZAKHSTAN PRAVDA JANUARY 13 ARTICLE IN WHICH IT IS STATED THAT DECISIONS TO FAVOR PRIVATE PLOTS ARE BEING TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE PLOTS. (THIS PAPER IS NOT NOW AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY).

4. COMMENT. EXISTENCE OF SUCH A DECISION WOULD NOT ALTER OUR VIEW THAT WHAT IS INVOLVED IS NOT A BASIC AND IRREVERSIBLE SHIFT IN POLICY TOWARD A GREATLY INCREASED ROLE FOR PRIVATE AGRICULTURE. RATHER, THE VARIOUS MEASURES THAT WE KNOW ABOUT AND THE POLICY STATEMENTS OF WHICH WE ARE AWARE ADD UP TO: 1) ALLOWING SOMEWHAT INCREASED INPUTS FOR PRIVATE PLOTS, ALBEIT OF A SIMPLE TYPE; 2) REASSURING PEASANTS THAT PRIVATE PLOTS WILL BE AROUND FOR SOME TIME TO COME; 3) ENCOURAGING THEM TO TRY TO RAISE OUTPUT FROM THEM; AND 4) LEGALIZING WHAT HAS BEEN GOING ON ANYWAY BY BOTH THE AUTHORITIES AND THE PLOT OPERATORS. MOREOVER, IT SHOULD IN OUR OPINION RESULT IN SOME INCREASED OUTPUT, ESPECIALLY OF MEAT PRODUCTS. IT IS, HOWEVER, IMPORTANT TO STRONGLY POINT OUT WHAT THESE ACTIONS ARE NOT, NAMELY THEY DO NOT SIGNAL A RETURN TO PRIVATE AGRICULTURE. FURTHERMORE, IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT BREZHNEV STATED
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ONLY THAT THEY ARE "STILL NEEDED" -- A LESS THAN HEARTY ENDORSEMENT -- AND LAST YEAR FOR THE FIRST TIME THEIR USE WAS CONSTITUTIONALLY CIRCUMSCRIBED. IN ADDITION, THE PLOTS ARE ALMOST CONSTANTLY SUBJECT TO SOME CRITICISM OF "PROFITEERING AND UNFAIR ADVANTAGE" DUE TO THE RESOURCE DRAIN WHICH THEY POSE AND MORE IMPORTANTLY THE HIGH SALES PRICES WHICH PREVAIL FOR SUCH SCARCE PRODUCE. IT IS TO BE REMEMBERED ALSO THAT THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT THE WIND HAS BLOWN FAIR FOR PRIVATE PLOTS, PARTICULARLY IN HARD TIME. TOON

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